NOTE XXXIII.

ON LEPUS NETSCHERI SCHLEGEL, FELIS MEGALOTIS MÜLLER AND ANOA SANTENG DUBOIS

BY

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Lepus netscheri Schlegel.

The type-specimen of this species described by me in the Notes from the Leyden Museum, 1880, p. 62, has been figured on plate I of the work entitled: »Bijdragen tot de kennis der Fauna van Midden-Sumatra, 1887". Although there is no reason to suppose that it is a very rare species, it nevertheless si a fact that it very seldom has been observed.

Mr. P. J. van Houten, formerley at Padang, related (see Fauna van Midden-Sumatra, p. 23) that he was told that there has been seen a Hare in a coffeeplantation in the neighborhood of Padang.

In March 1887 Mr. J. L. Weyers at Païnan, West Sumatra, wrote to Mr. C. Ritsema Cz., the well known Entomologist in the Leyden Museum, about *Lepus netscheri* as follows:

»En décembre 1881 Mr. I. A. Harten, Directeur-gérant de la mine de Salida, qui occupe encore actuellement les mêmes fonctions, se trouvait avec le mécanicien de la mine sur les bords de la baie de Païnan, surveillant le débarquement d'une machine, à peu de distance du promontoire situé à la partie septentrionale de cette baie et qui fait face à deux petites îles, nommées Poeloe tjinko besaar et

Poeloe tjinko ketjil. Son attention fut attirée par un group d'indigènes entourant un petit animal mort, qu'ils semblaient examiner avec curiosité et étonnement; il s'approcha à son tour pour examiner cet animal et fut fort étonné de constater que c'était un lièvre; c'était le premier animal de ce genre qu'il voyait depuis son arrivée aux Indes qui datait de plusieurs années déjà. Il demanda naturellement quelques renseignements aux indigènes; ceux-ci lui répondirent qu'ils ne connaissaient pas cet animal et que c'était la première fois qu'ils en voyaient un spécimen. Mr. Harten, n'étant pas naturaliste, n'attacha pas une grande importance à ce fait et ne s'en préoccupa plus; mais, lui ayant montré dernièrement la planche qui représente le *Lepus netscheri* dans l'ouvrage de l'expédition de Midden-Sumatra, que l'on m'avait communiqué, il reconnut immédiatement l'animal à ses oreilles relativement courtes pour le genre et aux particularités si remarquables de son pelage.

Des faits cités dans l'ouvrage de l'Expédition de Midden-Sumatra et de celui que je communique, il résulte évidemment que le *Lepus netscheri* est une espèce excessivement rare, du moins dans la partie de Sumatra où on l'a rencontré jusqu'ici, très accidentellement sans doute; il est non moins évident qu'il est confiné à cette grande île où il forme une espèce bien spéciale et distincte. — Le fait que cet animal est totalement inconnu aux indigènes de cette partie de Sumatra, semblerait démontrer que les rares spécimens rencontrés jusqu'ici, l'ont été tout à fait accidentellement et que ce n'est pas là que se trouve sa véritable localisation. Si nous raisonnons par analogie, en prenant en considération les habitudes et le genre de vie des espèces du genre *Lepus*, nous voyons qu'elles habitent les contrées tempérées et même septentrionales de notre globe; nous serons donc tentés de supposer qu'on pourra s'attendre à rencontrer le *Lepus netscheri* sur les hauts plateaux ou les hautes montagnes de l'intérieur, et que c'est bien là son véritable habitat.

Peut-être est ce bien là le cas et peut-être aussi nous trouvons-nous en présence d'un de ces cas de localisation très restreinte et assez étrangement exceptionnelle, comme on en rencontre assez souvent en entomologie, mais qui sont beaucoup plus rares pour les mammifères. Les rares naturalistes qui ont parcouru l'intérieur de Sumatra ont peut-être passé quelquefois près du *Lepus netscheri* sans s'en douter."

I am very indebted to Mr. Ritsema for the kind permission to publish the foregoing letter, which will interest naturalists, the more as I can hereafter add an extract from a letter received on June 23 last and written by Mr. J. C. van Hasselt, Controller at Solok, Sumatra. Mr. van Hasselt writes: »I possess a female specimen of *Lepus netscheri* described in the Notes from the Leyden Museum, 1880. I procured the animal when alive: after its dead I put it in spirits." Although some observations about the living animal would have been very welcome, these short lines suffice to convince us that a second specimen of *Lepus netscheri* has now been secured, and I express the hope that we will have it in Leyden at a not very remote date.

Felis megalotis S. Müller.

Again a very rare species, only known from the type-specimen in the Leyden Museum, described in the work entitled: »Verhandelingen over de Natuurlijke Geschiedenis der Nederlandsche Overzeesche Bezittingen, Zoologie, p. 54, 1839—44." — I am not aware that any traveller or naturalist has seen the species or has brought over a specimen. The type is a not adult specimen from Timor.

Giebel (Die Säugethiere, 1855) remarked: »vielleicht ist Müller's *Felis megalotis* von Timor nur eine blosse Varietät von *Felis minuta* Temminck."

Blyth (P. Z. S. L. 1863, p. 186) said: »*Felis megalotis* Temminck. Hab. Timor. (non vidimus)."

Dr. Gray has enregistered it in his Catalogue of Carnivorous, 1869, p. 33 and in P. Z. S. L. 1867, p. 275, in the following short terms: »Hab. Timor. Not seen by me."

Dr. Mivart has given a translation of Müller's original description (see: The Cat, an introduction to the study of Backboned Animals, 1881, p. 417). Dr. Mivart however failed to give Timor as certain locality: perhaps Mivart did so because some time before Mr. Elliot had given no credit to that locality and because Wallace (the geographical distribution of Animals, 1876, Vol. I, p. 422) too was of Elliot's opinion, for he wrote: »the *Felis megalotis*, long supposed to be a native of Timor, has been ascertained by Mr. Elliot to belong to a different country altogether."

The other day I received a collection of animals collected by Dr. H. ten Kate in Timor, and among other mammals he sent over a nearly full-grown male-specimen of *Felis megalotis* in spirits, with the request to expedite it to Dr. Max Weber in Amsterdam. Dr. ten Kate wrote to me that it seems to be a very rare animal, and that the Timorese call it *meo-foeik* (*meo* = cat and *foeik* = wild), the Malay *poes-oetan* (*poes* = cat and *oetan* = wood).

I think that now a second specimen from the same island has been brought over, nobody will doubt whether *Felis megalotis* really is a *Felis*-species from Timor.

Anoa santeng Dubois.

Under this name I exhibit a problematic mammal discussed by a friend of mine, who at present is in Java, Kediri Residency, excavating and studying fossils. I should not have fixed the attention of naturalists upon this mammal, were it not that my friend, Dr. Dubois himself has spoken about it — although in very short terms — in the Natuurkundig Tijdschrift voor Nederlandsch-Indië, 1891, Deel LI, Afl. I, p. 96. He relates there »that among

»other fossils he found bones of an *Anoa*, which should have »attained the size of a goat, and probably will turn out »to be no other dwarf-buffalo than the small *santeng*, »whereof the Javanese talk, and which differs from all »other known living and fossil species."

Now everyone will be very anxious to hear more concerning the *santeng* and therefore I will reproduce what Dr. Dubois wrote to me: »I found small horn-cores, measuring ± 10 cm., which I at first regarded as belonging to a *Capra*-species; having however now found rather large parts of frontlets with the same mentioned horn-cores attached to it, it seems to me that they are implanted like in the typical bovine-skulls. The fore-head is about half as broad as the same part in a middle sized *karbouw*. The animal attained, I think, the size of a goat. Now I recollect having been told by several Javanese of a very small species of *banteng* — and again inquiring some old men assured me that they had *seen* the animal. A Wedono drew the head with the horns, whereby it struck me that he was not brought to confusion by my remark that the horns were bent downward, he drew the horns upward and said that the color of the animal is black, excepting the legs which are white: size somewhat larger than *kanchil*. 'Highly interesting is that all the reports agree in the main points, f. i. as to the form of the horns, generally described as that of the fruit of a *lombok* (red pepper) — and that they accord, as far as it seems to me, with the fossil form. I think the small size ascribed to the animal to be a common exaggeration, like all relating originating from a not fresh source. This paradoxical animal generally is known under the name *santeng* and I therefore think to do homage to the Javan mind to natural history in calling the fossil animal later on *Anoa santeng*. The form of horns and of molars and its size make it namely very probable that it belongs truly to the same genus as the Celebian species."

So far Dr. Dubois. Although it may be that he is quite

right as to his new fossil, before having seen its skin, skull and horns I cannot believe that in Java an animal of such a rather large size still should be living, for I am of the opinion of Wallace who expressed his view about unknown mammals in Java as follows: »we should be almost as likely to find new species of (large) mammals in Central Europe as in Java."